NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
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**Anwar Sadat's 1973 Decision To Go To War:
A Case Study in National Security Strategy**

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The Arab assault across the Suez and Golan on 6 October 1973 caught Israeli and American decision-makers by surprise, despite intelligence indicators and years of Arab public diplomacy warning of coming war. The military imbalance in the Middle East made it inconceivable to many that the Arabs would initiate hostilities so soon after their defeat in 1967. To understand the evolution of events leading to war, it is necessary to review the national security strategies of the actors involved. This paper focuses on Egyptian strategy between 1970 and 1973 from the following three analytic perspectives:

-The Rational Actor Model: National security strategy as the product of a state's interests, its relative power, and the international environment.

-The Leadership Model: Individual decision-makers' perceptions, willingness to take risks, and political maneuvers as they influence strategy.

-The Process Model: The coordination and execution of strategy as factors affecting its content.

Each of the methodologies outlined above emphasizes fundamentally different, albeit related, aspects of reality. Collectively, these perspectives illustrate how the diplomatic and military tools of Egyptian statecraft, each limited in isolation, proved more than the sum of their parts when combined in a coherent strategy.

THE RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL: BACKGROUND

The rational actor paradigm is still a mainstay in the study of strategy. Favored over the years by such prominent thinkers as Hans Morgenthau, Thomas Schelling, Herman Kahn, Stanley Hoffmann, and Morton Halperin, it focuses on nations as unitary decision-

makers choosing between courses of action.[1] Adherents of this model view strategies in terms of nations weighing values, interests, power, objectives, and opportunities, and then making policy choices based on calculated risk. The rational actor approach is particularly attractive to theorists who deal with strategy in the abstract.

From a rational actor model perspective, the primary objective of Egyptian national security strategy following the 1967 war was to restore sovereignty over territories lost to Israel. The resource drain on the Egyptian national economy created by Sinai refugees and continuing military confrontation with Israel were staggering, while the national trauma resulting from the 1967 defeat produced strong popular demand for renewed conflict.[2]

Internationally, Egypt faced a situation of diplomatic stasis following the 1967 war. The Israelis, who had occupied the Sinai, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights since their decisive victory, were intransigent in their determination to hold on to those territories. Israel's perceived security needs were a dominant consideration in its policy and military doctrine. As a result of the Six-Day War, Israel's major population centers and ninety percent of its farms were out of Arab artillery range, its new borders were shorter and more defensible, and it had acquired defense in depth.[3] Israel's stated position was that a return to the status quo antebellum would not be acceptable. As Foreign Minister Abba Eban put it: "Never shall Syrian guns terrorize our villages in Upper Galilee and the Jordan Valley, never shall Egyptian forces a few miles away from our major cities stick their finger into our very throat, never shall hostile armies press against us in a narrow coastal strip."[4]

The Arab states were generally perceived to be militarily incapable of forcing the Israelis' hand, which negatively impacted their diplomatic leverage. Options available to the Arabs, already in a state of "no war – no peace" with Israel, were few. Economic tools such as the "oil weapon" had proven ineffective in altering Israeli policy, as had international condemnation through United Nations resolutions, public diplomacy threats, and the non-state strategy of terrorism - prominent at the Munich Olympics and in aircraft hijacking in 1972. Pressures stemming from an inconclusive strategy were gradually fragmenting the Arab coalition, as reflected in Egypt breaking relations with Jordan in early 1972.[5]

The international context reinforced diplomatic and military inaction. America's alignment with Israel was countered from 1967 to 1972 by Soviet involvement in Egypt. The large Soviet military presence in Egypt, totaling 15,000 military members acting as advisors, pilots, and Surface to Air Missile (SAM) crews, was meant by Moscow to protect the post-1967 Middle East status quo rather than support renewed war.[6]

Egyptian military planning for operations against Israel in the early 1970's focused on limited war. This was an acknowledgement of Egypt's conventional military disadvantage, particularly with regard to Israel's air superiority. Egypt was also aware by this time of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons.[7]

In sum, a rational actor analysis of Egypt's foreign policy dilemma circa 1972 highlights an impasse requiring drastic action to resolve. Diplomatic tools of statecraft had proven ineffective, in large part because Israel and the superpowers perceived Egypt as lacking a credible military force. Egypt's alliance with the Soviet Union, while serving the ultimate national interest of state survival, worked against Egypt's prime

foreign policy objective of regaining lost land. Israel's aid from the United States gave it
a continually increasing advantage in economic and military power. Egypt's means
available to break out of the debilitating status quo were limited, presenting a
considerable challenge to its leader.

THE LEADERSHIP MODEL: SADAT

It is tempting in reviewing history to attribute national security success to a
statesman's strategic insight, although a causal relationship between the two need not
exist. Conventional analysis of leaders' impact on strategy focuses on individual
decision-maker's intelligence, personality, attitudes, and perceptions.[8] The political
power of leaders, as reflected in their fluctuating domestic support, is another factor
directly affecting their ability to implement change, as is their political acumen in
coalition building, domestically and internationally. Finally, it is important to note that
the interests of the state and the statesman are not always synonymous. Foreign policy
decisions ostensibly made with the former in mind may actually primarily be intended to
shore up the latter's domestic constituency.

Upon assuming the Egyptian presidency when Nasser died in 1970, Sadat was faced
with the related challenges of consolidating his domestic power and recapturing lost
territory. Sadat struggled for popular acceptance initially. Succeeding Nasser, a
charismatic leader, presented considerable challenges. Sadat's promise, shortly after
taking office in September 1970, to make 1971 "the year of decision" vis-à-vis Israel
reflected not only his personal conviction that war was inevitable, but also his need to
rally the Egyptian populace behind him. [9]

Sadat's chief domestic rival at the time, Ali Sabry, Egypt's Commander of Air Defenses, was widely known to enjoy better relations with the Soviets. A struggle for control between Sadat and Sabry was waged by networks of their respective allies in key Egyptian institutions, but was centered on winning the loyalty of the military. Dissatisfaction within the Egyptian armed forces with growing Soviet influence tilted the scales in Sadat's favor, resulting in the arrest of Sabry and leaders of his faction in 1971.[10] This domestic power consolidation was a necessary precursor to Sadat implementing an effective national security strategy - the autonomy he now enjoyed as a decision-maker enabled decisive action.

Sadat's subsequent break with the Soviet Union in July 1972, when he expelled Soviet troops in Egypt, was another milestone in Egyptian security strategy evolution. The Soviets' departure served three purposes. In addition to further strengthening Sadat's domestic position, it opened the door to closer relations with the United States, and set the stage for offensive military action against Israel.

Domestically, the decision to send the Soviets home put an immediate end to disaffection within the Egyptian military.[11] It enhanced Egyptian sovereignty and correspondingly increased Sadat's power. Sadat later attributed his decision in part to the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo having "assumed a position comparable to that of the British High Commissioner in the days of the British occupation of Egypt."[12]

Privately, Sadat commented upon expelling the Russian advisors, "the United States (will) inevitably get in touch with us now."[13] A focus on the United States was central to Sadat's strategy. America's aid to and influence over Israel had led Sadat increasingly to the conclusion that Egypt was tied to the wrong superpower.[14] While the Americans held

the key to any settlement, their taking a proactive and evenhanded role in the Middle East could not be assumed.[15] Sadat believed that Secretary of State Rogers, who had visited the region in 1970 and 1971, "thought we would never fight" and consequently sought no concessions from the Israelis.[16] As a student of American politics, Sadat realized when expelling the Soviets in July that he could not hope to make progress in relations with the United States, or thereby gain indirect leverage over Israel, until after the November American elections.[17]

Sadat had pinned great hopes on the appointment of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State, rationalizing that Kissinger, as a Jew, would be able to pressure Israel more effectively than a statesman concerned with being labeled anti-Semitic.[18] Kissinger proved himself a difficult counterpart in meetings with Hafez Ismail in Paris in February and April 1973, when the American Secretary of State informed the Egyptian National Security Advisor that the United States could do nothing to help so long as Egypt "was the defeated party and Israel maintained her superiority."[19] These exchanges reinforced analysis provided Sadat by the Soviets following the Nixon-Brezhnev summit meeting in May 1972, to the effect that the Americans respect only force.[20] Egyptian planning underway for a military offensive proceeded accordingly. Sadat originally directed the offensive be planned for 15 November 1972, consciously leaving the American President-elect a few weeks to persuade the Israelis to withdraw peacefully.[21]

Sadat's intent to break the political stalemate through limited military action relied not only on an accurate assessment of the Israelis, but also on an appreciation of the likely American reaction to Egyptian aggression. Egyptian decision-makers have revealed little about their assessment of America in 1973. Beyond attributing a respect

for force to America, it is likely that Sadat recognized an American tendency Kissinger himself had addressed years before. "American negotiators – generally irrespective of their previous commitments – often become advocates for the maximum range of concessions; their legal background tempts them to act as mediators".[22] Realizing that superpower intervention would be required to quickly conclude the anticipated fighting, Sadat dictated to his National Defense Council on 30 September 1973 that Egypt would maintain open lines of communication with Washington and Moscow prior to and throughout the coming conflict.[23]

Simultaneous with his military preparations, Sadat personally initiated a diplomatic offensive condemning Israel at international institutions. He traveled to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1973, where the OAU passed its first resolution deploring Israeli activities. In June, the United States was forced to veto a United Nations Security Council resolution censuring Israel for the assassination of Palestinian leaders. In September, Sadat addressed the Non-Aligned Summit in Algiers, speaking as he had for years of the coming battle. The intent of this diplomatic activity was no longer to seek a negotiated settlement, but, in Sadat's words, "to prepare the world for war."[24]

Applying the leadership methodology to this case study provides insights into the evolution of Egyptian strategic decision-making. Domestic politics, specifically Sadat's consolidation of power in the Ali Sabry affair in 1971 and the expulsion of Soviet advisors in 1972, stand out as having enabled Egyptian national security strategy development. Sadat, who was willing to accept a high degree of risk, believed the only way to bring about a Middle East settlement was to precipitate action that would force the major powers to pay attention to the "no peace, no war" situation.[25] He recognized that a

territorial victory, no matter how small, would instill confidence in the Arabs and force Israel to reconsider its assumption that territory would provide security. Sadat's subjective assessments of Israeli vulnerabilities and superpower motivations were defining factors in the Egyptian strategy. Indeed, Sadat played a more decisive role in Egyptian strategy formulation and execution than might be expected of a head of state. The reasons for this can best be explained in the process model.

THE PROCESS MODEL: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION

National security strategies do not exist in isolation. Competing strategic visions may exist in different domestic government agencies or political parties. Internationally, successful strategy execution may depend on the extent to which policies are supported or contested by other nations.

The domestic process of developing a national security strategy differs between states and over time. The extent to which a polity is pluralist bears on the degree to which a leader may be required to compromise his strategy to coordinate it.[26] The policy process in Egypt, an authoritarian state, was not institutionalized leading up to the October War.[27] No effective checks and balances, in a Western sense, existed within the Egyptian political system, which freed Sadat, following the arrest of Sabry, of the necessity of compromising his strategy in a process of domestic coordination. Bureaucratic process, however, remains a key element in decision-making even in an authoritarian system. As documented by a series of distinguished scholars, key advisers' interactions with a head of state can profoundly affect strategy formulation.[28] Sadat's selection and management of his most trusted staff, and their work on his behalf, were essential elements of Egyptian planning in the final twelve months leading to the October war.

Sadat cemented his power consolidation by ordering several senior staff changes in Egypt between the expulsion of the Soviets and the war. In October 1972, he appointed his old Army colleague General Ahmed Ismail Ali as War Minister. Sadat then followed this with a cabinet shuffle in March 1973.[29] Egyptian national security advisor Hafiz Ismail and General Ahmed Ismail were two of Sadat's primary advisors in this period, representing Sadat's diplomatic and military tools of state respectively.

Of the two, Hafiz Ismail had the larger challenge. Sadat was ultimately his own foreign minister. He used Ismail as a surrogate, but there is no indication that Ismail influenced Sadat's strategic vision.[30] Sadat removed Hafiz Ismail, once described as his Kissinger, from office in the immediate post-war period. Ismail was succeeded by a series of short-lived Egyptian foreign ministers, including four in a period of ten months.[31]

General Ismail proved more influential than his diplomatic namesake, in part because of the military officer's close personal relationship with Sadat. Ismail, a controversial selection, was an unpopular officer with the troops and had twice been dismissed by Nasser. When appointed by Sadat as Minister of War, Ismail was already dying of cancer.[32] Despite his detractors' assertions to the contrary, Ismail was well qualified to serve in the top military slot. He had the education and experience necessary to achieve limited military objectives in the face of a superior adversary, having studied military history under the British, graduated from Egypt's Nasser Higher Military Academy (roughly an equivalent of the United States' National War College) and studied at Russia's Frunze Academy.[33] His military experience included command at every level, from infantry platoon to infantry division. He served as commander of the Suez Canal

front after the 1967 war, later as Head of General Intelligence, and finally as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces before being made Minister of War.

General Ismail, along with President Sadat, understood the foundational principles of civilian – military relations and how they relate to success in war. Both men realized that war is but a means to achieve a political end, and that an understanding of political objectives is necessary to determine military strategy.   Sadat and Ismail also had a shared appreciation for their respective roles in war; politicians should not be heavily involved at the operational and tactical level of military action, and the military leadership should keep out of politics. Sadat made this point in his biography when he wrote, "Politicians had been actual commanders of the armed forces in Egypt with disastrous results for us – in the 1956 War, the Yemeni War and finally in the 1967 War. The armed forces should be professional and should be kept out of politics."[34] This division of duties would eventually break down in 1973, but was largely observed in the period leading up to the war.

Sadat clearly delineated the political aim of the war in his planning directives to the military, citing the need for an offensive venture that would break the political stalemate. Having been given a formal written political objective by Sadat, it was General Ismail's task to develop a military strategy and attainable military objectives that would achieve the specified political ends. He did this by carefully analyzing capabilities and vulnerabilities of the Israeli Defense Force, the Syrian military and even the Egyptian military. Based on this analysis, he determined the centers of gravity for both Israel and Egypt in order to formulate a winning strategy.

General Ismail's assessment of Israel's unique capabilities included air power, mobile land warfare and the Bar Lev Line. Israel put a tremendous emphasis on maintaining an overpowering air force. In the 1972 budget year, Israel had spent 50% of its defense budget on the air force. Since the 1967 war, the Israeli military had nearly doubled the number of its combat aircraft from 300 to 550.[35] Israel maintained general tactical-technical superiority in mobile ground warfare that focused on the use of tank warfare.[36] Built by Israel after the 1967 War, the Bar Lev Line cost $300 million. It comprised six major elements:

- An underground and underwater pipeline containing inflammable liquid (napalm), running under the water beside the canal bank and capable of covering the canal with a sheet of flame.

- An embankment along the entire east bank 20 or more meters high and 10 meters at the base, designed to prevent amphibious vehicles from climbing it.

- 33 strong points and observation posts dispersed along the canal, hardened against artillery attacks.

- An extensive minefield system designed to "channel" attacking forces.

- Tank embankments constructed to provide cover for the tanks and provide fields of fire if the attackers crossed the first defensive lines.

- An extensive road network was constructed for the mobile reserves – primarily for the tank units and artillery.[37]

General Ismail listed the following Israeli vulnerabilities based on his analysis:

- An Israeli sense of invulnerability made them susceptible to surprise;[38]

- Israel had an active duty manpower disadvantage, and required 48 hours to mobilize a large reserve force;

- Israel had a strong aversion to casualties;[39] and

- Occupying the Sinai along the Suez Canal required long lines of communication.

Israel's military strategy, presupposing total military superiority, sought to deter attrition warfare by threatening to respond massively to any limited initiatives by its Arab enemies.[40] This defensive strategy was necessitated by Israel's inability to maintain a large standing army. Israeli doctrine contained three elements: intelligence – which would give the armed forces a warning of at least 48 hours; a small standing army to fight a holding phase; and an air force with a large regular component. The Bar Lev Line, a system of fortifications and mobile reserves stretching 100 miles along the Suez Canal, was a key component of this strategy.

The Israeli preferred air doctrine encompassed long range and deep battlefield interdiction as seen in the previous wars, as well as close air support. Essentially, the Bar Lev Line and the large regular air force would contain any attack, the reserves would mobilize, and then armor and air force would mount a combined counterattack.[41]

General Ismail believed that the Egyptians had two objective advantages: greater experience at defensive combat, and numerical superiority in manpower (80,000 Israeli active duty troops compared with 300,000 for Egypt[42]) and equipment. Egypt possessed one of the largest standing armies in the world with 315,000 troops, 2200 tanks, 1210 artillery pieces, 150 anti-aircraft missile batteries and 550 fighters.[43]

Ismail was also objective about Egypt's vulnerabilities - inferior equipment, (particularly tanks and aircraft), and the Egyptian army's low morale due to several crushing defeats. Although he did not directly address them in his assessment, Ismail also had to contend with two Egyptian centers of gravity that, if they were lost, would seriously degrade his war fighting capabilities: the Syrian army's ability to fight credibly enough to maintain a two-front war and Egypt's integrated air defense system.[44]

After completing his assessment, General Ismail outlined the following military objectives for the Egyptian Armed Forces: defeat the Israeli forces in the western Sinai by a deliberate assault crossing of the Suez Canal and the Bar Lev Line; seize five or more bridgeheads 10 to 15 kilometers deep on the eastern bank of the Canal; repel Israeli counterattacks; and inflict maximum losses on the enemy's forces.[45]

The plan to limit the effect of Israeli air power was threefold:

- To limit the range of operations for ground forces based on defensive weapons received from the Soviet Union. The plan was to create a dense missile "umbrella" with various Soviet ground to air missiles: surface to air (SAM)-2, SAM-3, SAM-6 and SAM-7 missile systems along with anti-aircraft artillery.[46]

- To avoid air-to-air combat with the Israelis. In the Six-Day War, the Israelis achieved a 10 to 1 kill ratio over the inferior Egyptian pilots and aircraft. After an initial strike against key targets (airfields, radar sites, SAM sites, command posts, etc.) the Egyptian fighters were to be kept in hardened shelters for later use.

- To deter the Israelis from strategic strikes deep into Egypt, SCUD surface-to-surface missiles were obtained from the Soviet Union. They could threaten towns

and cities in Israel. They were only to be used if the Israelis attacked deep into Egypt.

The plan to limit the Israelis' superior mobile land warfare capability was to cross the Bar Lev as quickly as possible, dig in before the Israelis could organize a counterattack and fight a stationary, defensive war. The Suez Canal and the Bar Lev line represented the greatest military challenge. General Ismail decided to attack the Canal along its entire length. This appears to be a fundamental violation of Clausewitz's principles of war regarding concentration of mass – "there is no higher and simpler law of strategy than that of keeping one's forces concentrated."[47] The Egyptians estimated, however, that this strategy would force an extended front and thereby dilute the Israeli air force's effectiveness and take advantage of Egypt's numerical superiority in manpower.[48]

Sadat orchestrated a highly successful strategic deception plan whereby he ordered mobilization and exercises near the Israeli border in May and October 1973. This caused Israel to mobilize in response. Each time Israel mobilized, it cost them $10 million dollars. Fortunately for Egypt, this "crying wolf" caused Israel to delay its mobilization when it really counted.[49]

The Sadat/Ismail strategy assumed the military superiority of Egypt's adversary over the long term. The planned war was intended to inflict sufficient casualties to break the diplomatic stalemate, but to be limited in duration and scope. They were keen to avoid another war of attrition at all costs. All that remained to complete Ismail's military strategy was to prioritize his objectives and to establish a timeline.

As their first objective, the Egyptians had to deprive Israel of the ability to launch a preventive or pre-emptive first blow by achieving total surprise on all levels and by forestalling Israel in launching the first strike.

Second, the Egyptians had to deprive Israel of air supremacy by establishing a modern and strong air defense system that could paralyze the Israeli air force. They planned to do this mainly with missiles and antiaircraft guns. At the same time it was necessary to safeguard the capability of the Egyptian air force to survive and operate throughout the war, constituting a constant threat to the Israeli armed forces.

Third, Ismail planned to deprive Israel of the capacity to deliver an effective counterblow with its armored forces in the first stages of the assault. This would be accomplished by imposing the battle upon the Israelis before they could complete combat preparations and concentration of troops.

Fourth, Egypt would deprive the Israeli army of its advantage of offensive maneuver warfare by entrenching their forces a mere 10-15 km east of the Suez before the Israelis had time to react. This would force them into a battle of attrition, giving the edge to the Egyptians.

Fifth, Egypt would ensure success by minute planning, preparation, and strenuous training for the assault of the Suez Canal and the destruction of the Bar Lev Line fortifications erected on its eastern bank.

Finally, the Egyptians would need to convince Israel of the futility of its military presence at Sharm el Sheikh. They would do this by closing the only supply route of oil from the south, that is, by blockading the entrance of the Red Sea at Bab el Mandab and closing the Suez Canal.[50]

In additional to General Ismail's unilateral planning, he was also engaged in extensive coordination with Syria. He had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Federation of Arab Republics on 21 January 1973.[51] A joint Syrian-Egyptian military committee, chaired by Ismail, made the final plans regarding the two-front attack.[52] It was the Syrians who originally suggested early October as the time frame for the planned assault, as weather conditions on the Syrian front would not be conducive for military action any later in the year.[53] The choice of the Israeli Yom Kippur holiday was intended to enhance the element of surprise. That date coincided with the practical considerations of tidal conditions and moon illumination.[54]

Keeping the details of the planned offensive secret from the vaunted Israeli and American intelligence services was essential. The Arabs' relative success in this regard can largely be attributed to a low-tech solution. Sadat, General Ismail, and LTG Gamasy all communicated with their Syrian counterparts using handwritten notes delivered by couriers rather than rely on technical communications that might be intercepted.[55] These notes were augmented by personal meetings when Hafez al-Assad made a secret visit to Egypt in April 1973, and Syrian Minister of Defense MG Mustafa Tlass led a delegation to Alexandria in August of that year. Close Egyptian-Syrian coordination leading up to the war would not be sustained once the conflict was initiated.

The distinction between strategy and tactics often blurs in crisis. The remarkable military success Egypt experienced in the early days of the 1973 war can be attributed in large part to Sadat's daring, Ismail's careful preparation, and their close cooperation with one another and Syrian counterparts. Emboldened by early military successes, Sadat's decision to adjust his objectives dynamically in October 1973 endangered the success of

the overall strategy so painstakingly developed over time. After refusing a cease-fire on 13 October, in an action that has been termed "victory rejected", Sadat personally altered Egyptian war plans to direct an ill-fated deeper push into the Sinai than had been previously envisioned. [56] As the military situation worsened in the days that followed, Sadat spent more time in the Egyptian military leadership's operations room, taking an active role in military decision-making.[57]

Ultimately, superpower diplomatic intervention saved Egypt from a probable embarrassing military reversal. On 19 October, six days after he had refused Kissinger's initial peace overtures and three days after Israeli General Sharon's crossing to the west bank of the Suez Canal, Sadat informed Assad that Egypt would request a cease-fire. The ensuing cease-fire, brokered by the Americans, went into effect on 22 October.[58] Kissinger's meetings with Sadat in the immediate aftermath of the cease-fire marked the beginning of a new strategic relationship between the United States and Egypt.

The Soviet leadership expressed its displeasure with Kissinger's maneuvers. Brezhnev had written to Nixon on 16 October delineating each state's sphere of influence in the Middle East, and emphasizing that any solution to the conflict should be undertaken by both superpowers jointly. [59] Kissinger subsequently traveled to Moscow at Brezhnev's invitation on 20 October. The Soviet leader based his discussions with Kissinger on the principle that "neither the Soviet Union nor the United States should seek unilateral advantage" in the ongoing crisis.[60] Together they drafted the wording of United Nations Resolution 338, the third paragraph of which read "The Security Council decides that, immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations start between

the parties concerned *under appropriate auspices*" (emphasis added).[61] This ambiguous

wording later provided the basis for America's enhanced role in the region as a mediator.

Israeli violations of the cease-fire provisions of Resolution 338 prompted Soviet

threats of unilateral action, which, on 25 October, resulted in the United States putting its

forces on the "Def Con 3" enhanced state of nuclear readiness.[62] Egyptian grand strategy

assumptions of superpower intercession early in the conflict, and an American

willingness to improve relations with Egypt, proved well founded.

From a process model perspective, multiple factors were at play in the formulation

and execution of the Egyptian national security strategy in 1973. These included Sadat's

freedom of action as a strong leader in an authoritarian state, the close ties between Sadat

and General Ismail, the latter's insightful military planning and analysis, the need to

incorporate Syrian considerations into planning, the fog and friction of war, and, finally,

the interests of the superpowers in the region.

CONCLUSION

Combining insights reached using the process model with those gained through

application of the rational actor and leadership perspectives provides a composite picture

of Egypt's evolving national security strategy between 1970 and 1973. Sadat's

assessment in 1973 of Egypt's national interest, its potential power, and the Israeli threat

differed little from Nasser's in 1970. The foreign policy objective of regaining lost

territory was equally important to both leaders, and each pursued this priority with

regional allies, through public diplomacy, and at international fora. Fundamental

underlying assumptions regarding the need to use force to attain strategic objectives also

remained constant. Ultimately, the status quo considered entailed more risk to Egypt in

the eyes of its leadership than a limited war. There was, however, a crucial aspect of

Sadat's national security strategy that broke with Egypt's past approach. This was the

closer and more effective marriage of diplomacy and military force made possible by

Sadat's maneuvering between the superpowers.

Sadat's domestic consolidation of power in 1971 and 1972, and the associated

distancing of Egypt from the Soviet Union, were necessary precursors to significant

policy shifts. Internationally, Sadat recognized a change of administration in the United

States and shifting international alignments as strategic opportunities to break the

diplomatic stasis in the Middle East.

The international situation and domestic environment are significant factors in

formulating strategy, but it is policy that enacts strategy. Policies have their own inertia.

They can be difficult to implement in a timely fashion, and, once implemented, often

outlast the situations they were designed to address. One of the great challenges of

statecraft is to get a bureaucracy to implement an appropriate policy before the targeted

opportunity or threat disappears in a changing political environment. The agile work of

senior Egyptian government officials in the areas of foreign policy and defense planning

was crucial in 1973. The fate of Syria, which did not prove as adept at diplomatic or

military maneuver at the time, demonstrates that the recipe of limited aggression and

quick international mediation is no guarantee for success. The efficiency of the processes

of Egyptian strategy formulation and execution were deciding factors before and during

the October 1973 war.

The limited Egyptian offensive of October 1973 was irrational in strictly military

terms. A satisfactory understanding of the diplomatic success that war ultimately enabled

can only be attained through multiple perspectives that address the intellectual and bureaucratic evolution of strategy. We hope this case study has achieved those ends.

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[1] See Graham Allison Essence of Decision, (Boston, 1971) for an insightful critique of the rational actor model.

[2] Matthew Hughes, "The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War: Crisis Management and Coercive Bargaining", RUSI Journal, (April 2000), p. 86.

[3] Bard E. O'Neill, _The October War: A Political-Military Assessment_, Air University Review, 25, (July-August 1974), p. 28.

[4] O'Neil, op. cit., p. 29.

[5] Insight Team of the London Sunday Times, The Yom Kippur War, (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1974), p. 46.

[6] Ibid. p. 54.

[7] Reports in the Egyptian media about the Israeli nuclear program were discouraged between 1967 and 1973, and Egyptian decision-makers' published reminiscences often avoid the subject. There are clear indications, however, that Egypt assumed prior to the 1973 war that Israel possessed between six and ten nuclear weapons. See Martin Van Creveld, The Sword and the Olive, (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), 220-221. A related work is Avner Cohen, "Peres: Peacemaker, Nuclear Pioneer", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, (May/June 1996).

[8] See for example Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, eds, <u>The International System: Theoretical Essays</u>, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) and Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception", <u>*World Politics*</u> (XX 1968).

[9] Insight Team, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 46.

[10] Raymond Hinnebusch, <u>Egyptian Politics Under Sadat</u>, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 43.

[11] Insight Team, o<u>p. cit.</u>, p. 58.

[12] Sadat, Anwar, <u>In Search of Identity</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p 231.

[13] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 232.

[14] Hinnebusch, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 36.

[15] This was particularly true given the focus of American foreign policy at the time on an opening to China.

[16] The Insight Team, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 46.

[17] Sadat, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 229.

[18] O'Neill, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 31.

[19] Sadat, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 238.

[20] The Insight Team, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 56.

[21] Sadat, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 234.

[22] Henry Kissinger, "Conditions of World Order", <u>Daedalus</u>, (Spring 1966).

[23] Mohammed Abdel Ghani El Gamasy, , <u>The October War</u>, (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1993), p. 186.

[24] Sadat, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 239.

[25] O'Neill, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 28.

[26] Kissinger observed that "the process of producing a bureaucratic consensus may overshadow the purpose of the effort" in modern democracies. "Placating the staff then becomes a major preoccupation of the executive. A form of administrative democracy results, in which a decision often reflects an attainable consensus rather than substantive conviction….modern decision-makers often find themselves the prisoners of their advisors". Henry Kissinger, <u>op. cit.</u>

[27] Hinnebusch, <u>op. cit.,</u> p. 14-16.

[28] See, for example, Joseph Marion Jones' <u>The Fifteen Weeks</u>, Harcourt, Brace and World, (New York, 1955), H.R. McMaster's <u>Dereliction of Duty</u>, Harper Perennial, (New York, 1997), and Irving Janis' <u>Victims of Groupthink</u>, Houghton Mifflin Company, (Boston, 1972).

[29] El Gamasy, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 176.

[30] David Hirst and Irene Beeson, <u>Sadat</u>, (Faber and Faber Limited: London, 1981), 158-159.

[31] Doreen Kays, <u>Frogs and Scorpions</u>, (London: Frederick Muller, Inc., 1984), p. 120.

[32] Hinnebusch, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 61.

[33] T. N. Dupuy, <u>Elusive Victory, The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947 – 1974</u>, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p.388.

[34] Sadat, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 233.

[35] Nadav Safran, <u>Israel,</u> <u>The Embattled Ally</u>. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 275.

[36] Major General A. H. Farrar-Hockley, "The October War," Chapter 2 in the *Arab-Israeli War, October 1973: Background and Events,* Adelphi Paper #111, (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies IISS, Winter 1974-75), p. 27.

[37] Dupuy<u>, op. cit.,</u> 395-98.

[38] El-Gamasy<u>, op. cit</u>., p. 183.

[39] Hassan El Badri, Taha El Magdoub and Mohammed Dia El Din Zohdy, "Decision and Concept," in *The Ramadan War1973*, (Dunn Loring, VA.: T. N. Dupy Associates, Inc., 1978), p. 23.

[40] <u>Ibid</u>. p. 22.

[41] Dupuy, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 144.

[42] Farrar-Hockley, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 15.

[43] Dupuy<u>, *op. cit.,*</u> 606-611.

[44] Farrar-Hockley, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 15.

[45] Dupuy, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 390.

[46] El Badri, El Magdoub and El Din Zohdy, <u>op. cit</u>. p. 20.

[47] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton University Press, 1976), 204.

[48] El Badri, El Magdoub and El Din Zohdy, <u>op. cit.</u> p. 21.

[49] Sadat, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 242.

[50] El Badri, El Magdoub and El Din Zohdy, <u>op. cit.</u>, 19-20.

[51] Insight Team, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 60.

[52] El Gamasy, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 183.

[53] Sadat, <u>op. cit</u>. p. 241.

[54] El Badri, El Magdoub and El Din Zohdy, op. cit., 26-27.

[55] El Gamasy, op. cit , 181-190.

[56] Hughes, op cit. 86-92.

[57] Hirst and Beeson, , op. cit, 158-159.

[58] Kissinger blamed himself for the Israeli cease-fire violations of 22 October, admitting that he had suggested to Israelis that he would not object to a few hours slippage in the agreed upon deadline. See Hughes, op. cit. 86-92.

[59] "The United States and the Soviet Union are strongly engaged with Israel and Arab states respectively"; Israelyan, Victor, "The October 1973 War", _The Middle East Journal_, (Spring 1995), 248-265.

[60] Loc. cit.

[61] Loc. cit.

[62] Hughes, op. cit., 86-92.